

of the deal that were not in the “best interests” of the tribes, as well as the opposition of both the local community and the nearby tribes. According to Skibine, the discussion of whether the deal was in the “best interest” of the applicant tribes lasted over an hour, was “very involved,” and became “very argumentative,” although it remained “not unfriendly.”³⁵⁷ It appeared to Skibine that the concerns that he and Hartman raised about this issue were “news” to the Four Feathers representatives.³⁵⁸ Skibine and Hartman avoided detailed discussion of these problems, thinking they should only tell the applicant tribes in more detail later because they were issues that needed more study by BIA and required renegotiation of the financial agreements with the non-Indian partners. Skibine recalls the participants in the meeting saying they were willing to try to address DOI concerns “when the time came” and there was no specific discussion of a timetable.³⁵⁹

Skibine also reported that Havenick claimed the local opposition had been generated by the St. Croix Chippewa tribe, and offered to send Skibine documentation of his claims. Skibine never received any such documentation.³⁶⁰

Between the time that the Hudson application reached Washington and their meeting with John Duffy on May 17, 1995, the applicants had maintained a steady dialogue with the Department. As previously discussed, tribal leaders came to Washington for an introductory meeting with IGMS staffers on Jan. 12, 1995. Financial analyst Hartman also reported several

³⁵⁷OIC Interview of George Skibine, Nov, 6, 1998, at 6-8.

³⁵⁸*Id.* at 7.

³⁵⁹*Id.*

³⁶⁰There is little evidence to corroborate the applicants’ fears that opponents had inflated or otherwise deceived DOI about the true local community sentiment. *See* Section II.B.3.b., *supra*.